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Kumashiro, K. K. (2020). *Surrendered: Why progressives are losing the biggest battles in education*. Teachers College Press.

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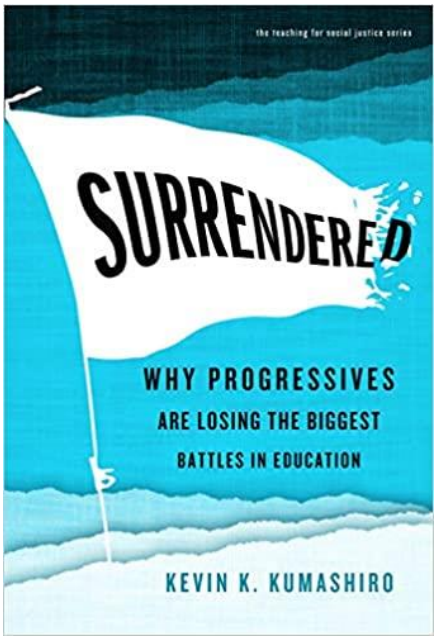

Kevin Kumashiro has been among the most committed and clearest writers of critical material in education for a number of years. In previous books such as *Against Common Sense*, *Bad Teacher*, and *Troubling Education*, he has documented the ways in which many supposed educational "reforms" have led to deeply unequal results along an important range of oppressive dynamics and has articulated significant reasons to move beyond them.

Surrendered is a rather different kind of book. It is aimed at a wider audience. This is evident both in its length (89 pages) and the fact that it has neither notes nor references. Once again, Kumashiro proves that he is a talented writer, blending cogent political/educational criticisms with more personal stories. The book's more personal character at times enables him to make connections between writer and reader in ways that are often harder to do with more conventional academic styles. This is definitely a benefit for many readers. But it can lead to rhetorical overstatements and a loss of complexity in understanding the contradictions, limits, and possibilities involved in struggling against dominance.

Language performs many functions. It can be used to describe, explain, legitimate, and mobilize, for example. Kumashiro's focus in the first section of the book is to "bear witness to negatively" (Apple, 2013, p. 41)), to provide a politically committed description of what "our" education system actually has done and now does. He connects multiple relations of dominance and subordination, giving insights into the practical meaning of "intersectionality."

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In the process, he suggests the development of a political process of movement creation that embodies what I have called decentered unities (Apple, 2013).

The somewhat briefer second section is there primarily to mobilize. It is a call for action that not only questions the dominant common sense assumptions both hidden and overt about schooling, but also points to what could be done differently. Kumashiro calls for a broader "we" to be formed, a "we" more deeply committed to creating an education that is deeply grounded in what in more theoretically involved terms Nancy Fraser has called a politics of redistribution, recognition, and representation (see, e.g., Fraser, 1997).

Thus, in that second section, Kumashiro critically examines a range of significant issues that demand attention. He points to possibilities for interrupting dominance in each. These include affirmative action, free speech and hate speech, bullying, student debt, and teacher shortages. In the process, he correctly recognizes that substantive transformations require the formation and defense of social movements. This focus on social movements is important, since it is clear that it is social movements that are often the forces behind educational and larger social transformation – both progressive and retrogressive (Apple, 2013; Charnery et al., 2021).

Although his arguments and examples are indeed very thoughtful, given his focus on social movements I was surprised to see what was missing from the issues he chose. The politics of curriculum, of what is and is not declared to be "important" knowledge has little place in his analysis. Yet, struggles over such things, and the cultural politics involved, are central to the formation of social movements and to the formation of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic identities (Apple et al., 2018). This is quite visible, for instance, in the growth of conservative mobilizations on the Right. Indeed, it is not possible to understand the power of authoritarian populist religious movements and their influential role in the politics of education without centering the debates on Biblical authority, the mistrust of science, and many other elements at the core of these debates (see, e.g., Oberlin, 2020). This is even more significant today, given the exponential growth of homeschooling both nationally and internationally (Apple, 2006), the growing rightist attacks on Critical Race Theory, and the increasingly public claims that schools, teachers, and curricula are part of a larger well-organized attempt by the Left to indoctrinate children and "divide our nation." A serious discussion of these rightist mobilizations and the intense politics involved would have added more power to the arguments that *Surrendered* advances.

This point is worth stressing. Given the growth of Rightist movements, we face a reality where the unsayable is now sayable and the undoable is now doable. Thus, interrupting these movements in everyday practices in schools and communities is even more essential. In relation to this, given this growth, it might also have contributed to the power of the book if Kumashiro had devoted more time to pointing to actual movements and people who are now putting in place the policies and practices he is advocating. In education, Rethinking Schools and its wide range of politically/educationally engaged publications

comes to mind as one example (Christensen et al., 2019; Cuauhtin et al., 2019; Watson et al., 2018).

Surrendered does speak to some of these issues in more general terms, and this recognition is to be applauded. It advocates for an Education New Deal, a coordinated effort to transform education through a well-funded and deeply committed set of policies that *fundamentally* challenge both the current roles schools play in the reproduction of inequalities and the common sense assumptions that underlie current dominant policies and practices.

Do not misinterpret my suggestions for additions to the text. There is clearly a limit to what can be dealt with in a book of this size. What Kumashiro gives us is certainly worthwhile, both in its content and in its readerly style. All too much of the critical literature in education requires the reader to do a good deal of hard work to understand it. Of course, at times such largely theoretical contributions are quite significant, and I do not want to diminish their importance. However, as I have argued elsewhere (Apple, 2013), building a larger movement – creating a more encompassing "we" – to interrupt dominance also requires that critical educators relearn how to speak and write in different registers to different audiences. *Surrendered* is a serious attempt to act on this responsibility.

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